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VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-5694 APRIL 6, 1978
DOUGLAS ROBERTS/CAIRO

MULTI-NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY PROPOSAL

ANNCR:

A CONFERENCE OF JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA SCHOLARS FROM DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING NATIONS MEETING IN CAIRO HAS HEARD A PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION OF A MULTI-NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY POOL TO REPORT ON DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN THE THIRD WORLD. DOUGLAS ROBERTS HAS DETAILS FROM THE EGYPTIAN CAPITAL.

VOICE:

THE IDEA WAS PUT FORWARD BY ROGER TATARIAN, FORMER EDITOR AND VICE PRESIDENT OF UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL AND CURRENTLY A JOURNALISM PROFESSOR IN CALIFORNIA. (OPT) HE SUBMITTED HIS PLAN DURING THE TUESDAY SESSION OF THIS CONFERENCE, THE SECOND OF ITS KIND TO BRING TOGETHER JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA EXPERTS FROM EUROPE AND THE U.S. AS WELL AS FROM A NUMBER OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN ASIA, AFRICA, AND LATIN AMERICA. THE MEETING ON THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS MEDIA AND THE DEVELOPING WORLD IS SPONSORED JOINTLY BY CAIRO UNIVERSITY, EGYPT'S MIDDLE EAST NEWS AGENCY, AND THE EDWARD R. MURROW CENTER OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY, PART OF THE FLETCHER SCHOOL OF LAW AND DIPLOMACY AT TUFTS UNIVERSITY IN THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS. (END OPT) MISTER TATARIAN'S PROPOSAL CALLS FOR A JOINT EFFORT BY WESTERN AND DEVELOPING WORLD NEWS AGENCIES TO FOCUS ON ECONOMIC, INDUSTRIAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE THIRD WORLD. HIS HOPE IS THAT THIS MULTI-NATIONAL POOL WOULD PROVIDE THIRD WORLD STATES WITH MORE INFORMATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS OF THEIR NEIGHBORS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME HEIGHTENING WESTERN AWARENESS OF THOSE EFFORTS.

MISTER TATARIAN SAID HE BELIEVES THE BASIC IDEA WOULD HELP ACHIEVE BETTER COVERAGE OF THE DEVELOPING NATIONS IN THE WORLD PRESS AND HELP CORRECT WHAT HE SEES AS THE IMBALANCE IN THE FLOW OF NEWS AT PRESENT. THE IDEA EVOKED AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE IN THE CONFERENCE HALL AND SPARKED CONSIDERABLE DEBATE. WHILE MOST OF THE WESTERN DELEGATES SEEMED TO FAVOR THE PLAN, MANY FROM DEVELOPING NATIONS EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS, WITH SOME OF THE STRONGES MISGIVINGS VOICED BY AFRICAN DELEGATES.

THE THIRD WORLD'S CRITICISM OF WESTERN REPORTING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IS LONG STANDING AND VEHEMENT. THIS WAS REFLECTED IN THE INFORMAL DEBATE ON MISTER TATARIAN'S PLAN. THE FOUR MAJOR WESTERN NEWS AGENCIES -- U.P.I., THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, REUTER OF BRITAIN, AND THE FRENCH NEWS AGENCY -- ARE FREQUENTLY UNDER FIRE FOR REPORTING ONLY SENSATIONAL AND NEGATIVE STORIES AND IGNORING THE POSITIVE SIDE, SPECIFICALLY PROGRESS IN DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.

MISTER D.M. SUNARDI OF JAKARTA SAID HE BELIEVED DEVELOPMENTAL NEWS IS OF PRIME IMPORTANCE IN HIS COUNTRY, WHERE THE MAJOR PROBLEMS ARE HOW TO FEED AND EMPLOY MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, AND YET WESTERN MEDIA, HE SAID, FREQUENTLY SEEM TO FEEL THAT DEVELOPMENTAL NEWS IS NOT NEWS AT ALL.

MANY OF THE WESTERN DELEGATES CONCEDED THAT THERE ARE FAULTS IN WESTERN MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE THIRD WORLD, BUT THEY SEEMED TO FEEL THAT MISTER TATARIAN'S PROPOSAL WOULD HELP TO CORRECT THOSE FAULTS. CLAYTON KIRKPATRICK OF THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE SEES A TREND TOWARD MORE WESTERN MEDIA BACKGROUND REPORTING ON THE THIRD WORLD, DEALING LARGELY WITH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS. AND EDWARD BEAR OF NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE SAID THE PROPOSED MULTI-NATIONAL POOL MIGHT WELL HELP TO OVERCOME MISCONCEPTIONS THAT PEOPLE IN THE DEVELOPED WORLD HAVE ABOUT THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES. JOSEPH KINGSBRY-SMITH OF THE AMERICAN HEARST NEWSPAPER CHAIN TABLED A RESOLUTION

CALLING ON THE CONFERENCE TO ENDORSE MISTER TATARIAN'S PROPOSAL IN PRINCIPLES AND TO AUTHORIZE A FEASIBILITY STUDY. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE RESOLUTION WILL BE ADOPTED. BUT IT DOES SEEM CLEAR THAT MISTER TATARIAN'S PROPOSAL WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION IN THE WEEKS AND MONTHS TO COME.

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